

Halo: Paladin Lost

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Summary: A Sangheili tells his story to some ONI interrogators. They have questions, and he has the answers. *Please note that Chapters 1 and 2 have not been submitted since I just wanted to submit these few Chapters to a creative writing event; I'll probably add them at a later date.

1. Summary

It's been two years since the discovery of Requiem, and the new war has just begun. The Forerunner known as the Didact has survived, and has brought with him a brand new armada of Prometheans to his side, while his second-in-command of the Covenant Remnant, known as Jul 'Mdama, has recruited an entire planet to their cause. The future of Humanity is not looking too bright.

But one person, not a human but rather a Sangheili, may hold the key for turning the tide of the war. ONI interrogators have questions that need to be answered, and while this Sangheili is willing to answer them, he must first explain his story to have everything make sense.

Time is running out however, as Covenant and Promethean forces fight to get inside the interrogation facility and make sure that the Sangheili's answers are not revealed.

2. Chapter 3

The war was declared when the new Hierachs were put into control; The Prophets of Truth, Mercy, and Regret. They told us that humanity were to be exterminated for the will of the gods, as the humans had much disrespect for the gods' creations.

I gladly went to many battles against your kind. The thought that I was able to show the gods that I had no flaws. That I could do their bidding. And working for both them and the Hierachs was a great

pleasure. All filled my heart with happiness. I was put back onto the Glorious Ascension. I survived many of the ground battles thanks to my brother. The Shipmaster destroyed many of your ships, and took part in many glassings upon your planets.

I see the anger on your face. I am terribly sorry for what happened during all those years. I now know it was all for nothing. So many precious lives destroyed for nothing. Except for the truth. I assure you this, female. Their sacrifices were used well in the end. Now, back to my story. We do have little time, after all.

Many of the battles I took place in were either very slow, or very quick. Due to my many flaws, I had to be put at long range with the Kig-Yar and use long range weaponry. The carbine was my personal favorite, but the beam rifle, a long sniper rifle that shot very concentrated plasma, was a better overall choice for me. One of my flaws is the fact that I'm colorblind. The long range fights were difficult at times for me as I had a hard time differentiating the right colors at longer distances. Enemies were able to hide much better from me. My eyes are much better up closer.

I've been told that Unggoy blood is actually blue instead of green, and the cyan I saw on High Charity was actually just boring white. This was one flaw I had that I actually liked. Many things that were usually plain and boring to most looked beautiful to me. I thought this was actually a gift from the gods, allowing me to see the beauty in life that most wouldn't see.

During the early years of the war, our fleet stumbled upon one of your planets. I was on the bridge of the Glorious Ascension, along with my brother, the Shipmaster, and fifteen other Sangheili either stationed at consoles or waiting, when one of the Unggoy read the Luminary. The small creature read the series of three silver pyramids, two smaller ones supporting an upside down larger one in the center, for a good five minutes. The Shipmaster was getting impatient, but kept his temper cooled.

The Unggoy turned around and looked at the huge figure. "It says there's a holy relic down on the planet, but it seems to be broken," the Unggoy started. "I know a Holy Writ says a Luminary never lies, but this one..."

The small creature took a big gulp. He was very nervous. It was heresy to say a creation of the gods could lie, and to say so was punishable by death. "But this Luminary says there's a living Forerunner on the planet."

We all stood there, shocked. The Shipmaster took a huge, gasping breath. None of us could believe it. Why would a living Forerunner work with the humans? Why has it stayed on this planet? Why did it not go on the Great Journey after the holy rings were fired? I did not say it out loud, but I agreed with the Unggoy; The Luminary had to be lying.

"We will head down onto the planet," the Shipmaster started instructing. "We will find the living Forerunner. And burn any humans that stand in our way."

The Shipmaster then looked at the Unggoy. "And if there is no Forerunner, you will be executed."

The smell of Unggoy feces came into the bridge. The Shipmaster was disgusted. "Go down to the cargo room, you filth! If it wasn't for you being the best Luminary translator on this ship, I'd execute you right now! And Unggoy!?" The Unggoy stopped as he was running towards the cargo room, and turned around to look the Shipmaster in the eyes. "And don't you dare clean yourself up."

The Unggoy nodded his head nervously, turned around, and quickly ran to the cargo room. I felt pity for the creature, but the thought of a living Forerunner made my pity quickly leave.

After fifteen minutes of preparation, I headed for the hangar bay. My brother stopped me. "You're not going," he told me.

I was shocked. "Why, brother?"

"This is something you're not ready for. If there truly is a living Forerunner down there, then you are not worthy to meet him or her."

"Because of my flaws? I've proven myself time and time again that I can do the gods' biddings!"

"From a far distance. And you're still a minor. You've not killed enough humans to earn the next title, even though you've been in quite a few battles, brother. Any other Sangheili would have earned a new title by now, but not you. I say again, you're not worthy for this."

How could this kind of opportunity be slipping away from my grasps? If I have not proven myself yet, then showing a living Forerunner that I could prove myself would surely redeem me.

"The best way to prove myself, brother," I began as I was trying to convince my brother, "Is by letting me go down to this planet, find the living Forerunner, and show him or her I am worthy. By any means."

"Even if he or she asked you to kill yourself," my brother asked.

"Yes."

Even though I said yes, I couldn't see myself actually committing to it. But I was sure as soon as I met the living Forerunner, I'd convince myself otherwise.

My brother stood there for a while, quiet. Then he finally replied "Fine." He exhaled deeply, and left for the hangar bay, shaking his head. He still found me unworthy, but if killing myself could prove otherwise, then he was convinced, whether he liked it or not.

I headed for the hangar bay, thrilled to meet an actual living Forerunner. Thrilled to serve. In any way possible.

I entered the hangar bay, and looked for my designated Spirit dropship. The Spirit's were shaped like tuning forks, and had side hatches on each prong. I got into one of the hatches of my designated dropship, and strapped in. My brother was also in this dropship. We

did not say a word as we left the hangar bay of the Glorious Ascension and headed down towards the planet.

3. Chapter 4

The Spirit dropship was unusually bumpy. As we entered the planet's atmosphere, we entered a large thunderstorm.

"Brace yourselves, brothers!" the pilot exclaimed.

As we braced ourselves, our Spirit got struck by lightning on the right side. The entire crew on the right side of the ship was completely fried. The smell of burnt Sangheili and Unggoy skin reeked the other side of the ship. The ship lost control, and began shaking uncontrollably.

"We're going in for a hard landing! May we all walk the blessed-"

The pilot was cut off as the front of the Spirit dropship had hit land hard. I became unconscious as soon we crash landed.

"Can anyone hear me?" a voice asked. "Are there any survivors?"

The voice came over the overcome of the dropship. I awoke laid on my stomach outside of the dropship, rain hitting me hard. The dropship had hit a small mountain. I looked up, rain hitting me hard in the face. The mountain looked huge from where I laid. I looked at the dropship's opened side hatch. I needed to contact whoever was asking there were any survivors. I needed their air and ground support because humans would surely head towards the smoke.

I reached a hand towards the dropship to begin crawling, and my wrist instantly became full of pain. I screamed in agony. As I did, broken bones and many of my flaws kicked in full of pain. My left elbow, the fingers on my left hand, the right side of my stomach, the back of my legs, and my feet all screamed in agonizing pain. It was unbearable. Each of those flaws were very weak built skin. It hurt to simply hold a carbine, let alone when I pulled the trigger and the recoil kicked in, damaging all those fingers.

I suddenly heard a very familiar voice.

"Brother!? Is that you!? Are you alive!"

I could barely manage to make the words come out of my mouth, "Yes, Rha'!"

"Then we are truly blessed! Brother, you must crawl towards the Spirit, and contact our brothers for help! I am pinned against some debris, so you must contact them!"

"I... can't..."

I struggled to make the words for two reasons: One being of all the obvious pain, and second being that I did not want to let my brother down. But I couldn't crawl. It was impossible for me. My flaws might have well have been the debris, or rather the entire dropship.

"I know you can, Mori," my brother began. "You come from the bloodline of 'Vhokuree. And you're a gift from the gods." He then laughed. "And I've seen Unggoy do less crying than you."

Inspirations. Both positive and negative. I did not believe my brother, but it did help me at least try to crawl.

I reached my right hand towards the crashed dropship, letting my left hand not take as much punishment. As I pulled myself forward, all the pain quickly came back. I screamed in pain.

"You can do it, brother! Ignore the pain! It'll all be over soon! Just keep going!"

I reached my left hand towards the dropship, and as soon as it hit the ground, pain quickly rushed in. My two upper jaws bit each of my two lower jaws. I pulled myself forward. More pain quickly rushed in. My upper jaws bit so hard into my lower jaws that they started bleeding. I did not like the taste. I never liked the taste of blood. Tears came from my eyes. That was dishonorable. A disgrace to my bloodline. Tears, from a Sangheili. No one's ever heard of one doing such a thing because of pain. They embraced it. Welcomed it. But I did not. Could not. This was too much. Dishonorable or not, any Sangheili enduring this much pain would shed tears, whether they would admit it or not.

"Should we send a search and rescue?" One of the Sangheili spoke from the intercoms coming from the crashed dropship.

"No," a second Sangheili said. "We continue with our mission. Keep heading towards the objective. We have more important matters than a pathetic excuse for a Sangheili. At the least, he died with honored. The others will be missed though."

That was me they were talking about. I'm the pathetic excuse for a Sangheili. That enraged me. How could I prove to a living Forerunner I was worthy if I was pathetic? Unless...

"Brother!?" I screamed, pain kicking in everywhere and wet mud all around my body and face.

"Yes!?" my brother asked. I could not see him because of all the debris, and we had to scream back at each other because of the loud thunderstorms.

"This is my test! I am supposed to survive this test!"

"Then do not fail it, brother!"

I had figured it out. I told my brother, not matter what the test was, I could prove to a living Forerunner that I was worthy. This was that test. Whether he or she was here or not did not matter, as long as I could tell them, honestly, that I survived this.

I reached my right hand towards the dropship, and pulled myself forward. Pain quickly rushed in without hesitation, and I screamed. But not of pain, or at least most of it, but of anger. Anger that if I failed this test, I would be a disgrace, not just to my bloodline, but to everything. A disgrace to even the ground in which I was

laying on.

I put my left hand in between me and the dropship, ignored the pain that came as my fingers hit the ground, and pulled forward. Wet mud came to welcome my face, as well as the pain all over my body. Tears mixed with the wet mud, but I was still pushing forward.

I looked up, and as the wet mud and tears cleared away from my face, I saw the crashed Spirit dropship's opened side hatch. Wires hung everywhere. Electricity sparked every five second. And plasma pooled out onto the ground. This meant one thing that I did not realize before: This ship was a ticking time bomb.

I ignored the issue as my right hand reached for the opened hatch. I stretched to get a grip of it, pain instantly flowing in. If I didn't know any better, I would say a few Jiralhanae were biting my weak built skin off, one by one, having a snack to enjoy and play with.

My hand grabbed onto the opened hatch, and I pulled myself into the dropship. The pain that I felt was unlike anything before. I screamed so loud that I thought my voice was the thunder booming.

Now, I was so close to the cockpit, so close to contacting my fellow brothers, and letting them know my brother and I were still alive here. But I couldn't do it. I couldn't pull myself that much further. That few extra feet. I rested myself in the dropship. I had given up. I had failed the test. And now my brother and I were going to blow up from this dropship, and while my brother will experience glorious salvation, I will experience damnation forever.

"Brother!" my brother suddenly exclaimed. He sounded very worried.
"Brother!"

As I was about to ask what he was worrying about, suddenly something hit me in the rear. Once. Twice. Three times. Then suddenly, I was bitten. I wasn't going to die by the explosion, I was going to die by being eaten alive.

"No!" I screamed. "No! Not this way!"

I turned around, ignored all the pain, and saw what was biting me. A huge, tan skinned, four legged animal with multiple spikes on its back known as a thornbeast was biting me with its small, long necked head. This was completely unusual, since thornbeasts were herbivores. Meaning, this was the ultimate damnation. The gods had seen me completely unfit, and had made this herbivore eat me alive.

But then, as the animal had it grip on me, it pushed me forward. Once. Two times. It let go of me, and then used its head to push me forward. Toward the cockpit! Which meant the gods are helping me! They had found me worthy! I looked towards the cockpit, and I could see the radio right in front of me. I pulled myself forward, ignoring the pain, reached for the radio, grabbed it, and spoke into it as I activated it.

"This is Mori 'Vhokuree! My Spirit crash landed into a small mountain!" I tried to ignore some of the pain that kept kicking in, and the more I ignored it, the more it became bearable. "My brother and I are the only survivors, and require immediate instance! Our

Spirit is a ticking time bomb!"

A few seconds past by, then a voice suddenly boomed through the entire dropship.

"This is the Shipmaster of Glorious Ascension, Thel 'Komtaree. A Spirit is on its way to pick you two up. ETA, thirty seconds."

I let go of the radio, and exhaled a sigh of relief. The exhale hurt, but it did not matter. My brother and I were going to live. I turned to see if the thornbeast was still there. It was. It gave a big roar, shook itself, turned around, and left.

Thirty seconds later, I heard human gun fire, a Spirit's turret firing, and the continuing thunderstorm and heavy rain.

A few minutes after that, a few Sangheili arrived wearing EVA suits. One walked up to me. I could see his face in through the protected glass that covered majority of his helmet. Him and another EVA wearing Sangheili began to pick me up. Pain beyond imagination kicked in. I did not scream, but instead became unconscious.

I quickly became conscious again, and I was in one of the side hatches of another Spirit dropship. The Spirit began rising off of the ground, and the hatches slowly closed. Before it fully close, I noticed two dead Sangheili brothers and over a dozen dead humans. The hatches fully closed, and the Spirit started catching speed. I heard an explosion, in which it then shook the whole ship. My head hit against the wall, and I became unconscious again.

4. Chapter 5

"Did the crew of Glorious Ascension ever find the living Forerunner?" the human female interrogator asked. She had interrupted Mori's story.

"The story is not over, is it?" Mori asked.

"I'm simply curious. And we are running out of time. So I need this story sped up. None of this has anything to do with what you did. I just need the important details"

"Like I said earlier, female, all of which I will say will connect in the end somehow. All of which I will say are important details. I assure you this, female."

The female human exhaled. She still had patience. Good, Mori thought, I like to abide as much time as possible. And once I'm done will this story, I may not live much longer, so someone must know my story. Or all of which I have done will be for nothing.

"Continue then," she told Mori.

"I will gladly oblige," Mori told her truthfully.

When I awoke, everything was blurry, and, thanks to me being colorblind, all the lights glowed bright cyan. I looked around, first noticing the pain was completely gone. I first thought I was dead, and had entered paradise. This made me over ecstatic. This meant I

had past the test, and the Forerunners had found me worthy. But when my vision cleared, I had noticed I was inside the medical bay of the Glorious Ascension. I was exceptionally relieved about this. It meant I was alive, and while paradise sounded great, I still wanted to live. Every Sangheili wants to live, whether they'll admit to it or not. Knowing I was alive still also meant I had still passed the test, and now all of my brothers would know.

I looked at my body to see if it was still there. Since I did not notice any sign of pain, I thought my body was gone. Don't know why I thought this since everyone needs their bodies to live. I noticed many sealed up scars across my entire body. I had finally earned some battle scars, even though they weren't earned from a foe in battle, they were earned from a battle of survival.

I then looked to both the left and right beds, to see if my brother was here with me. He was not. Something sank deep down inside me at that moment. The thought of my only brother, the one that has saved my life time and time again, being gone darkened my heart. I started thinking it was the gods' faults for not allowing him to live. To allow thunder, a natural thing controlled by the gods, to kill my only brother. Why kill a messenger so valuable?

I heard a door open up, and footsteps walking in. I also heard gas; Was very unusual to hear that. I looked to my right, and saw two Sangheili and a Huragok, a purple floating biological computer with gas sacs and a small armadillo-like head with three eyes on each side, coming to my bed. The first Sangheili was the Shipmaster, Thel 'Komtaree; He had saved my life by kindly sending a spare Spirit dropship down to a very risky crash site. The other Sangheili, to my relief, was my brother, Rha'! I jumped up quickly, and the Huragok suddenly used two of its four tentacles to push me down back onto the bed. This was very unusual for the floating creature, as its species was known to be quite harmless and ignore all of the Covenant species majority of the time.

The Huragok then looked at a machine next to me. The machine was very simple: A huge monitor with many symbols, abbreviations, and numbers, and many wires and tubes connected to it. I just noticed that the tubes, eight of them, were all connected to my side. The tubes were connected to a case full of green (actually blue) liquid, in which the Huragok was touching quickly. The liquid turned purple, and pumped into me.

"The Huragok is numbing the pain," my brother explained.

"You're lucky we have any numbing liquid left in our inventory," Thel began. "The Unggoy usually drink it all before we can use it. They're addicted to the stuff, I'm afraid."

"Brother, are you fine?" I asked.

"Of course," he replied. "When we crashed, I was thrown out of the side hatch and into the small mountain. Some of the debris crashed onto my legs, making me unable to move. The hit against the mountain broke a few bones in my arms. But it's going to take more than that to kill me, brother."

Rha' wasn't just bragging about living. He was exceptionally tough. I'd say he was one of the toughest Sangheili aboard Glorious

Ascension, only second to Shipmaster Thel.

"How long was I knocked out?" I wondered.

"Three days," Rha' replied.

"Three days!?" I was knocked out for that long? "Did we find the living Forerunner?" I had to ask. I wanted to know. Needed to know.

"No," Thel started. "We've been tracking him or her through the Luminary the whole time. It appears to be working with the humans, and willing fighting against us."

Why would a living Forerunner, one of our gods in the living flesh, do that? Was he or she mad? Did he or she find the Covenant unworthy? I did not like that last thought.

"So we've got actual reports of seeing him or her?" I asked.

Rha' sadly looked down. "No."

"Then how do we know he or she is fighting us?"

"Because every time we come to his or her location, the humans start fighting back," Thel started explaining. "And he or she is in the crowds. And then it and the humans fall back when we gain ground, and we lose track of the Forerunner. Our Luminary loses its trace."

A Luminary losing its trace? Since when has it ever done that? "When will the next ground force be sent?" I asked, skipping the Luminary question as questioning it would be a bad move.

"In exactly one hour," Thel told me. "Why do you ask?"

"I want to go."

"What!?" Rha' asked in shock. "You barely survived the first ground deployment, and didn't even fight a single human, let alone pull the trigger. And as soon as you wake up, you want to go back down there!?"

"The numbing liquid is working quite well," I started explaining. "Give me a double dosage when we're about to head down onto the planet, and I'll be fine for a good few hours."

"Thel will not send a crippled soldier onto the field! It will be a waste of resources!"

"No," Thel told Rha'. "If he wants to go down onto the planet once again, then I will not stop him. Huragok." He looked at the Huragok, and it looked at him. "Give this Sangheili a single dosage in forty-five minutes, and then release him."

The Huragok made some clicking noises, apparently in agreement, and floated towards the door and left the room. Thel turned around, and headed towards the door. As the door opened when he came close to it, he stopped and turned around the look at me.

"Your flaws are a blessing. Do not hate them, for they give you

strength. You're only getting a single dosage, for your honor's sake. Any other Sangheili would not have even a drip of that liquid."

Thel turned around and left the room. The door closed with a hum. Rha' looked at me with a questioning glare, but there was also a hint of concern.

"If you die," Rha' started saying. "Then it will be dishonorable. Because you will have foolishly ran into the fields of battle without your hand being blessed by the messengers of the gods."

Rha' exhaled, stood up, and left the room. I do not know if what he meant what he said, or just said it to encourage me to live the coming battle. Clearly, the latter had worked.

I laid back against the bed lazily, and fell asleep. I awoke to a Huragok slapping me in the face to wake me up. I looked at the container and noticed it was half empty. A single dosage. Better than none. I nodded at the Huragok, and it made some clicking noises while also shaking its head. I did not know what that meant, but I'm assuming it meant he was nodding back in happiness. I planted my feet onto the ground, and felt nothing but the cold purple floor. I then stood up, balanced myself, and satisfied at my stance, I headed towards the armory, suited up, and then headed into the hangar bay.

When I entered the hangar bay, I noticed something very familiar outside the huge blue shield door that kept the oxygen inside the ship. I was looking at High Charity. Its size was magnificent. The holy city was the shape of a giant mushroom, with its stalk below being a docking station. There was a huge hole ontop of the mushroom shape, and directly beneath that hole held the holy Forerunner Dreadnought ship. I thought to myself, the messenger of the gods, the holy Hierachs, have blessed my hand. This mission, whether I die or not, will be honorable.

I looked at the Spirit dropships inside the hangar bay. I noticed my brother waiting in one of them, and headed for that one. We were both assigned to the same dropship, so even if I didn't know which one to get on, I knew that whichever one my brother was on was the one I was supposed to get on too.

I got into the side hatch that my brother waited in, and strapped myself in. The Spirit started up, closed its two side hatches, and left the hangar bay. Once again, my brother and I did not say a word during the whole trip down towards the planet.

5. Chapter 6

The ride down towards the planet was smooth. Our dropship slowed its pace, and after a few seconds, both of its side hatches opened.

The sun beamed into the ship, blinding my vision. As I used my arm to block most of the sun's rays to exit the dropship with a good landing, the pilot told us the ETA.

"You've got exactly one hour, brothers. The Luminary says the living Forerunner is around here. Expect human resistance. No matter what happens, make sure the Forerunner stays alive. I'll pick you back up

here."

The Spirit's side hatches closed, and the dropship flew over us, turned around, and flew over us again, this time towards the skies.

My eyes finally adjusted towards the sun's bright rays. I lowered my arm, and noticed that my brother, seven other Sangheili, five Unggoy, and a Kig-Yar were already armed and ready for a fight. I was slacking already. I took the carbine off of my back, and aimed forwards. I looked through the small, green scope to see if the area was truly clear. I was satisfied at it appeared to be clear, and then I looked at the Kig-Yar beside me and noticed he was also satisfied.

"Clear," the Kig-Yar said out loud.

"Then push forward towards the hills," my brother ordered. He was the leader of our squad.

We pushed towards the hills in front of us. Or at least, the hills that were the easiest to walk on. The entire area was full of hills. Full of ambush opportunities. As we came to the top of the easiest hills, we noticed a small human base.

"I bet my food nipple that god inside there," one Unggoy said.

"You don't have any food nipple left," a second Unggoy said.

"That cause you sucked it all dry!"

"Because it was so good!"

Rha' grabbed both of the Unggoy by their necks, and raised them high up into the sky.

"Not another word," my brother ordered, quietly. "Or we'll be exposed to the enemy before we meet our god."

Rha' let go of the Unggoy, and they both hit the ground with their rears simultaneously.

"Sorry, boss."

"Shhh, boss say not another word."

Rha' looked at them both with anger. Both of the Unggoy kept their mouths shut for the rest of the mission.

"Engage active camouflage," my brother ordered.

Suddenly, everyone in the squad disappeared. I almost felt sorry for the humans that had to deal with an invisible Kig-Yar from a long distance.

"Brother, engage yours as well," my brother told me. "Your armor has been updated for this mission. Do not get used to this."

I didn't say anything as I activated my camouflage. I then suddenly disappeared. I could see my hands and rifle, but that was only

because I could see the difference in the air. If my hands and rifle were seven feet away from me, I could not see them very well, if at all unless I was actually looking for them.

"Move forward and spread out," my brother started instructing as we moved towards the building. "Remain hidden. Do not make a noise. Do not make any mistakes. We cannot be detected until we find the living Forerunner. If one of you finds him or her, then make three clicking noises. We'll come towards you."

For the next ten minutes, I did not see any of my squad members. I entered the outside perimeter of the building. I had put the carbine onto my back to avoid any pain that may suddenly come out of nowhere and onto my left handed fingers.

I looked around for a living Forerunner. Or rather, something that didn't look human. I had no idea what a Forerunner actually looked like. I don't think majority of the Covenant did, even the Hierachs.

After not finding anything but the awful stench of filthy humans that had clearly been in the recent battles of the past three days without a bath during their breaks, I moved towards of the door of the building. I waited until a human opened it. I moved to the side, and suddenly bumped into something. I heard a yelp and some boxes falling, and when I turned around, I could barely see the disoriented air with the shape of an Unggoy. I quickly grabbed the small creature, moved around the human that opened the door, and moved inside the building as the door slowly closed. I could hear a few humans outside complaining.

I pulled the Unggoy towards a safe area, and let go of him.

"What in the name of the gods are you doing?" I asked.

The Unggoy replied in quiet terror "Tried to get inside. Sorry for accident. Don't kill me."

"I'm not going to," I assured the small, methane breathing creature. "But be more aware of your surroundings next time. Otherwise, someone else will kill you."

"Yes, small boss," the Unggoy said as he left my sights. What I told him was more towards me, but it wasn't going to hurt him if I ordered him to, at the least, stay careful.

I looked around the building that I had entered. Cyan lights filled the huge, curved ceiling. The room was huge. Jeeps that you humans call Warthogs filled the room. No humans stood on the turrets on the back of the Warthogs, but I was sure if a firefight ensued, someone would instantly jump on one and open fire without hesitation. I did not plan on finding out. I moved through the building. There were not rooms in sight. Just a long, huge hallway with crates lazily laying around at each side, out of the moving Warthogs' ways.

I ended up at the end of the hallway, and found a door. It eventually opened, revealing an elevator with several humans onboard. They casually exited the elevator, talking in a friendly chatter, and then I got onboard after I was sure no humans would get on. I was not happy that there was an underground to this building, but it could

explain why the Luminary would lose the living Forerunner. However, Luminaries could easily reach far below a planet's surface, even as far down as the planet's center core, so an underground facility would not explain it.

As the elevator came to a stop, I noticed a huge, two-legged machine with two giant arms, one holding what looked to be a machine gun, and the other holding what looked to be missile launcher. Cords were connected all around the machine, and human scientists were thoroughly working on it. I wondered, did the Forerunner give the humans the technology to build such a device? Most of the humans weaponry were more primitive than ours. This machine appeared to an equivalent to one of our vehicles, the Locust, if not much better.

I looked around the rest of the underground room. Human forklifts carried heavy crates as they slowly drove around. Soldiers and scientists filled the room; The soldiers were completely on guard duty with no friendly chatter, while the scientists were busy on either the machine or taking equipment out of the crates to place next by the machine.

I then noticed something new: A jammer. The jammer was at least ten feet high, with a rectangular base and a long pole sticking out that lead to a sphere on the top that glowed bright blue. Connected to it was a seven feet wide by seven feet high rectangular generator. This explained why the Luminary would lose the Forerunner. This jammer was powerful enough to jam even holy technology in space. This had to be the works of the living Forerunner.

Finding this new evidence, I had to find out if the Luminary was still picking the living Forerunner. If it was, then he or she was not here. If it wasn't, then he or she was in this very room with me. I had to contact the outside.

As I was heading back towards the elevator, I saw the air become disoriented. It grabbed me, and pushed me towards an area with no humans around. I could tell from the shape of the disoriented air and the strength that it was a Sangheili.

"Brother," the voice was very quiet, but I could tell it was my brother, Rha'. "We need to destroy both the jammer and the machine."

"What about the Forerunner?" I asked him. "That's our main goal."

"The goal has changed. If we do not destroy these, a huge number of our brothers will suffer. We need to destroy the machine before it is completely operational, and we need to destroy the jammer so we can easily find the Forerunners. A huge threat will be destroyed, and our previous main goal will be easier to succeed. We can just say we didn't find him or her, in which we haven't anyways."

My brother made logical sense. We'd be killing two birds with one stone, as you humans sometimes say. I had to agree with him, but how were we going to destroy machine? The jammer was an easy job, but we did not have the equipment with us to destroy the machine.

"How do we destroy the machine?"

"We bombard it. I'm assuming it's somewhat operational, so we destroy the jammer, alert the guards, force them into the machine while we act like we're trying to destroy it, and then lure it outside. Our Spirit dropship will see it coming. We only have five minutes, so the dropship will definitely be waiting."

Five minutes until the numbing liquid's effects stopped. But this was a one in a million shot, and it had to be done, so what else could I do?

"Very well," I replied. "I'll destroy the jammer."

"Good decision," my brother replied, satisfied with my answer. He and I both knew there was no way I could distract the machine after five minutes, let alone right now.

I headed towards the jammer, avoiding the scientists and forklifts coming through. I reached the jammer, and walked around the generator, looking for a soft spot. Once I found it, I pulled out a blue rounded plasma grenade, and planted it into the exposed hole. I then pressed the green activation button, and the grenade lit up bright blue.

I ran towards some crates laying down close to the elevator, took the purple carbine rifle off of my back, and prepared. The grenade detonated, causing the generator to explode in a mix of bright orange and blue flames, which thus caused the jammer to explode. Destroyed silver pieces of both the jammer and the generator, along with some equipment and crates went flying all over the room. The humans went into chaos. Some scientists ran towards the destroyed jammer while the guards looked around with their bulky silver assault rifles aimed.

I noticed that my brother had joined me in the cover. We both came out of camouflage, activated a plasma grenade in each hand, and threw them at the machine. Three of the four grenades successfully stuck onto the machine. The fourth one, one of the grenades I threw, stuck onto a scientist working on the machine. All four grenades blew up simultaneously. The scientist completely disappeared in the smoke while parts of the machine that were stuck burst into flames.

Was it truly that easy to destroy it, I thought to myself. Just a few more plasma grenades and it was done for? Of course not. The areas that were in flames were quickly extinguished by fire extinguishers carried by machines, and then patched up by spare parts carried by the same machines. I'm assuming the machines were controlled by dumb AIs, something that was illegal in the Covenant due to a story of the gods' own AI creation turning against them.

As the alarms kicked in, my brother and I poked out of our cover, and fired our rifles at the guards. We took down six guards by the time the rest of them reacted. Ten of them fired their assault rifles at us, some bullets managing to hit our personal shields, lighting our entire bodies up in bright blue, before we took half of them down. The remaining five ducked behind cover. As my brother and I reloaded our rifles, we heard five simultaneous clicks, and after two seconds, five simultaneous thuds. We looked at where the sounds were coming from, and noticed five pineapple-shaped grenades laying in front us, all about to detonate.

We both jumped over the crates we were previously ducking down behind, and then ducked down on the new side. We fired at two of the guards that decided to see if we were either just about to die or just came out of cover to avoid the explosion. The grenades behind us exploded, forced the crates we were using as cover to thrust forward, hitting us in the back, and forcing us down onto the ground.

I lost grip of my carbine, and looked up to notice the last three guards were aiming their rifles at me. Suddenly, two of the guards were pulled backwards, and yelled at being in pain, and then the third guard turned around to fire at whatever had killed his allies. The third guard's head was suddenly severed clean off. A figure came out of camouflage, and revealed one of the Sangheili from our squad carrying an energy sword, a U-shaped blue blade coming from a silver handle covered in Covenant writing. Four more figures came of camouflage, two being Sangheili, and the other two being Unggoy, one of which I had earlier saved.

"Arm your grenades and throw them at the machine!" my brother ordered.

>The three Sangheili and the two Unggoy happily obliged. They took out their plasma grenades, armed them, and aimed at the machine. As they went to go throw their grenades, they all suddenly vanished in a huge explosion. My ears rang due to the explosion. I looked and saw that a human had managed to get inside the machine, and had fired one of its missiles at the squad arming their grenades.<p>

My brother and I turned around and ran towards the elevator as the plasma grenades detonated in the gray smoke. We got onto the elevator, and my brother hit the switch. The elevator started moving up slowly. The machine looked at us and fired its machine gun. We ducked behind cover, and the bullets hit over and under the elevator. Some bullets went through our cover, and some hit my brother. His shields flared bright blue, and vanished. Blue sparks were covering his entire body. I poked out, and fired my carbine at the machine. The green, singular bullets flew towards the machine and every shot hit dead on with ease.

The machine wrestled with the cords still connected to it, and was soon freed. Orange sparks flew everywhere around the machine and the disconnected cords. The cords rapidly withered around like a snake on fire. The machine moved towards the elevator, knocking over crates with its huge feet. Every stomp shook the elevator that was slowly becoming loose.

Suddenly, my fingers on my left hand began to hurt. I let my left fingers let go of the carbine, and only held it by my right hand.

"Brother," I told Rha'. "The effects are slowly wearing off!"

"By the gods, not now," my brother worried. "Just run towards the landing zone. I'll kill any soldiers in your way."

I nodded my head, but I didn't like that idea at all.

As the elevator came to the top floor, my brother fired at the guards waiting for us. He quickly shot each one in the head. In less than five seconds, eight guards were down, and only the last half were able to fire at us.

The elevator shook rapidly.

"Move!" my brother ordered.

We jumped over the elevator's railing, and sprinted forward. The elevator went crashing down. Several guards started firing at us. As our shields flared, my brother fired at the guards, putting many of them down. Suddenly, chain gun bullets fired at us. We both ducked behind some random crates. A soldier had gotten into one of the turrets of a Warthog. My brother looked at me.

"Brother!" Rha' started. "Poke your hand out until you get shot at!"

I slowly moved my right hand out of the cover, and then the chain gun bullets hit it. My hand swung backwards, but the shields kept it from getting severely hurt. My brother poked out of his cover, and shot the soldier managing the turret in the head. I looked at my hand, and noticed a bruise started to form all over my palm.

"Go!" my brother ordered as he ran out of cover.

I jumped over my cover and ran towards the door. A soldier got in the way, and I tackled him. As we hit the ground, I ignited a small, blue energy dagger that was hidden within the armor covering my right hand. I shoved it into the soldier's face, and red blood covered my hand. I stood back up, and ran towards the door, energy dagger withdrawing and red blood dripping.

Three guards arrived in front of the door to stop us. My brother put his rifle over his shoulder, and reached for the handle of his energy sword. As it ignited, he swung it from left to right. The sword made contact with two of the three guards, and they quickly dropped dead. The third guard aimed his assault rifle at my brother, and then my brother swung. The guard ducked, avoided the blade, and fired at my brother. I reached for the guard's throat, grabbed it, and threw him against the wall. My brother then stabbed his sword threw the guard's stomach. As he pulled out his sword, the guard's stomach burnt with plasma. I could smell burned skin and intestines. I dropped the guard.

"Pilot!?" my brother asked over his radio. "Are you there!?"

Ten seconds went without a reply, then a voice finally came through.

"Yes, brother!" the pilot answered over the radio. "We were just about to leave assuming you were dead!"

"Far from it, brother!" my brother replied in proud joy. "We're inside a human base, waiting at the front door. Think you could come over and greet our patient greeters outside?"

The pilot laughed with joy of exterminating some humans. "Of course!"

After fifteen seconds, we could hear fire coming from our dropship, and then returning fire from the human soldiers outside. Thirty seconds after that, it became very quiet.

"You are clear, brother," the pilot started saying. "We're just waiting for you now."

As we opened the doors to the outside, and became blinded by the sun's bliding rays, my brother started informing the Spirit's pilot. "Pilot, there is a heavy weaponized machine that we need to destroy! Get ready for heavy bombardment when I tell you to."

"Awaiting your orders." the pilot replied, sounding nervous. He probably didn't like the sound of something that could possibly take down his ship.

My brother and I ran towards the hills. I could barely see the hills because of the sun's rays. I could smell the awful stench of dead human bodies as we ran by the battle that had just happened.

Suddenly, I heard an explosion, and then the ground shaking. I turned around, and noticed the giant machine emerging through a huge area of black smoke coming from the side of a new building that I never noticed before. I was surprised that I missed noticing it in the distance. That building must have been where the machine was able to come in and out from. There must have a ramp that led towards the underground room.

"Keep running!" my brother ordered.

I turned around and ran towards the hills. As I climbed them, I could hear machine gun bullets shooting, missiles flying, and heavy bombardment coming from behind me.

My brother and I then reached the top of hill. We then ran down the hill. Suddenly, pain arrived in the back of my legs. I screamed in pain as I quickly dropped down, face first, into the dirt. As I hit the ground, I rolled down the hill. Pain kicked in in both my left handed fingers and the back of my legs. When I reached the bottom of the hill, dirt kicked into my eyes. I screamed in more pain, and tried to get the dirt out of my eyes. After twenty seconds of doing this, I managed to get the dirt out of my eyes, and my brother had arrived at the bottom of the hill.

"Brother!?" he asked. "Are you fine!?"

"Yes! I will survive!" I answered him in pride.

"Brother, Shipmaster Thel interrupted me on the radio! He told me the Luminary says the living Forerunner is coming towards us!"

The pain suddenly went away. I completely ignored it. Of all the timing, this is when the living Forerunner decided to greet us. I had to ignore the pain to show him or her I was truly strong. I could not show any signs of weakness.

I slowly stood up, biting my lower jaws as the pain kicked in. I then stood up proudly. Suddenly, I heard two explosions. I looked at the skies over the hills. There was black smoke rising high up into the sky, and then the Spirit dropship arrived over the hills. It flew very low towards our way. Both prongs on each side of the ship were bursting in bright blue flames. The dropship was severely damaged.

Exposed wires could be seen everywhere on the dropship's armor. The dropship flew right over us and crash landed thirty meters away from us. It exploded into blinding blue flames, and the explosion shook the ground. The wind caused from the explosion threw both my brother and I onto the ground. Pain kicked in, now everywhere, in my body. I almost screamed in pain, but reminded myself that the living Forerunner was coming our way very soon.

I slowly stood back up. When I managed to stand on both legs, I noticed my brother was already standing up proudly. Then we both heard loud footsteps coming from the hills.

"Rha'," Shipmaster Thel's voice came over the radio. "The Luminary says the living Forerunner is less than thirty meters away from you."

"Brother, get ready," Rha' told me. "We are about to be blessed for our hard work and devotion. Salvation for all."

My brother then crouched on one knee, bowing for the coming god. I did the same, biting my lips as the pain in the back of my legs kicked in. The footsteps kept coming, and then stopped.

As I was very curious, I looked up towards the hill. A tall, bulky figure around seven feet tall, stood at the top of the hill. It walked down the hill, and towards us. My heart started beating very fast, and then the world seemed to slow. A living Forerunner was coming to greet us, and notice my devotion and bless me, even if I was a weakling.

Since I obviously did not know what a Forerunner looked like, and was very curious as to what one would look like, I looked at its face. The sun beaming brightly onto the figure made it hard to make out the face, but I did notice a bronze visor covering its face. It was wearing a helmet to protect its face, and then I noticed it was bulky not because of its actual body, though that might have helped, but because of its armor. The armor was a dark green color. It kept walking towards us, and when Rha' stood up to greet it, it picked up its pace.

"Holy Forerunner, a god and savior to our people, we are truly blessed that you have arrived to save us from damnation! We will do your bidding without-"

Suddenly, the living Forerunner punched Rha' right in his left jaw. Purple blood arrived without hesitation.

"What have I done to deserve such-"

The Forerunner grabbed Rha's throat, and began choking him. I could hear his bones cracking.

"No! Stop!" I screamed at the figure. I no longer believed this thing was a Forerunner. Rha' was a messenger from the gods. There was no way a god would punish their own messenger for doing what he was born to do, even though he did not know it.

I ran towards the figure, ignoring the pain in my legs that was unfortunately welcomed by my body. I ignited both of my energy daggers, one from each hand, and went to swing at the figure.

The figure looked at me, dropped Rha', and kicked me in the right side of my stomach, one of my flawed areas. The pain quickly rushed in, and it severely hurt. The air was knocked out of me. My energy daggers sliced across the dirt ground as they retreated back into my armor, leaving a small trace of dark blue and black plasma scorchers.

The figure walked up to me, and put its foot onto my throat, and pressed hard. Blood started coming from my mouth, and I began choking from both the figure's foot and my own blood.

I heard an energy sword ignite, and the figure turned around to greet my brother's blade. The blade went across the figure's chest, cutting deep. The figure moved backwards, holding its chest. My brother swung again, but the figure ducked from the swing, and then punched Rha's chest. It knocked the air out of Rha', and he dropped the energy sword.

The figure then grabbed my brother's arm, pulled him forwards, dislocating his arm from its socket, pulled a small human submachine gun from one side of its legs, and then shoved it into Rha's stomach. It pulled the trigger, and let the small, black gun go upwards due to its high recoil. The bullets went through Rha's body, and when the SMG reached his mouth, the bullets went through his mouth, through his brain, and out the other end towards the bright, clear blue sky.

It stopped firing, realizing Rha' was no longer there, and then threw him onto the ground like a pathetic rat that deserved absolutely nothing. Rha's energy sword's plasma slowly disappeared. Both lives being sucked away without justice.

The figure then looked at me, and began walking towards me, putting its SMG away. I looked at the energy sword that my brother had dropped. It was laying close to me. I reached for it with my right hand, grabbed it, and ignited its blade. The figure got close to me, and kicked me in the jaw. I rolled to the other side, energy sword still in hand.

I swung the energy sword at the air to my side, hoping to hit the figure. Instead, the figure simply kicked the energy sword out of my hand. It was taunting me.

It kicked me in the side, and I tried not to scream in pain, but the kick was incredibly hard. It then grabbed my throat, pulled me up, and raised me towards the sky. I could see my face in the reflection of its bronze visor. My face looked terrible. I did not even recognize it was my own face at first.

As the figure let me go, it punched me in the right side of my jaw, throwing me hard into the ground. I could hear some of my bones crack. I screamed in pain. The figure then walked up to me, and kicked me in my side to turn me over and let me look at its face to face.

It pulled out its black SMG, and aimed at my face. Suddenly, a thin, single strand of blue plasma went right through the back of the figure's helmet. The figure fell on top of me, lifeless. Its body was incredibly heavy. I used all the force I had left in me to push it

off of me. If I didn't, its dead body would have crushed my lungs, thus suffocating me to death.

As I pushed the body off of me, I noticed a small hint of disoriented air. As the figure came out of camouflage, I noticed my savior. It was the Kig-Yar sniper that had stayed back on top of the hill. So this Forerunner was the unlucky human that had to deal with an invisible Kig-Yar from a distance. I emphasized Forerunner and human because I did not believe, no matter what, that that thing was a Forerunner, and because no human has had those abilities before.

As I got up, trying to ignore the pain, I looked at my dead brother. I did not shed a tear for him, because he would not have wanted that. Seeing my brother, dead, truly dead, witnessing his death, was... I did not like it. Thinking he died without me seeing him after the crashed landing made me not as depressed. But to actually witness it...

"I'm sorry, female. I need a break." Mori told the female interrogator.

"We do not have time for breaks," the female replied.

"Just thirty seconds... Please."

The female gave Mori a puzzled. Probably for two reasons. The first being that he said please. And the second is seeing him show feelings about a lost loved one. Both quite unusual for a Sangheili.

"Very well," she finally replied. "We'll give you three minutes."

The female hit the stop button on the recorder, got up from her seat, stretched, and then headed for the door and left.

Mori leaned backwards, and let one tear shed.

Abigail closed the door, and headed into the room with the one-way window. Three ONI officials, including the previous interrogator, stood there.

"A three minute break?" Jacob, the first interrogator, asked. "We don't have time for this!"

"We're learning so much from both the Sangheili's and the Covenant's society!"

"Because that's more important than what's going on out there!?" one of the spooks, Mike, asked in impatience as he pointed. "Both the Covenant and the Prometheans are on our doorstep, trying to get in, trying to stop us from getting this hingehead's information! We need that information now! Before it's too late!"

"And so what if his honor, or bloodline, or whatever the hell he care's about is shamed," the second spook, Ryan, said in anger. "We should just beat the information out of him. We know his weaknesses. Just break them to the point of where he'll be begging us to kill him."

"He's providing us with a great deal of information!" Abigail started

explaining. "He'll tell us why he did what he did and what he knows, and he'll teach us about the Sangheili and Covenant society, all of which can be used against the enemy! And breaking him won't work. He's already said he has nothing to lose."

"Except for not being remembered," Ryan pointed out.

"Maybe he's worth being remembered," Abigail said, defending Mori and the story he was telling.

Jacob exhaled impatiently. "Fine. Give him an hour. And pray the Spartans outside can defend this location for that long."

"Thank you," Abigail said gratefully as she exited the room and headed towards the interrogation room.

The female opened the door and came into the room. Mori stood up straight.

"You can sit down, Mori."

Mori gladly sat down. The female reached for the recording button, but hesitated.

"My name's Abigail."

"Greetings, Abigail. I'm glad to formally meet you."

"Same here," Abigail said with a smile as she hit the recording button.

"Now, about the figure. The fake Forerunner. Do you know what it actually was?"

"I learned it was indeed a fake Forerunner. I called it a demon, and apparently that caught on with the rest of the Covenant later on when one of your Spartans, the Master Chief, blew up the first Halo ring."

"Yes, well, now all the Spartans are called demons by the Covenant, and none of them take too kindly at that title. What do you know about the Spartans?"

"They're humans. Augmented, I'm guessing, to be the best of the best of your species. I've met quite a few very strong humans, but nowhere near as strong, and as agile, as Spartans. And I've been recently finding more and more of them."

"And how do you feel they compare against your species?"

"I believe they're better. But only because of one thing: They have no honor. My species foolishly believes in something that truly does not exist. Same as the Covenant foolishly believes that the Forerunners are gods. Even when the Monitors of the Halo rings created by the Forerunners have said otherwise... Multiple times."

"Interesting. And you still believe that even after witnessing an actual living Forerunner wreck havoc against humanity with ease?"

Mori leaned forward. "The Didact is full of anger. Full of hatred. And full of power. But take these three away, and what is he? Nothing. A god could have none of those things, and still be better."

"I wouldn't be so sure."

"And what does that mean?" What does that mean? What are you hiding, female?

"Nothing. Just mumbling to myself. Anyways, back to your story?"

"Yes, of course. We are running out of time, after all." Mori leaned back into his chair. A god would not be better without those qualities? Is that what you're getting at, female? And if so, why? Why would you think that? I'll find out. In time. When I've gained enough of your trust.

6. Chapter 7

After being picked up by a Spirit dropship, and being put back into the medical bay of the Glorious Ascension, Shipmaster Thel 'Komtaree greeted me, told me how he felt sorry for my lose, an usual thing for a Sangheili to say, and then told me something I thought I would never be worthy for.

"The Hierachs want to speak to you about the living Forerunner, and why your squad killed it, and then burned it."

There were two things about what he said. First, I was beyond happy that the Hierachs wanted to speak to me. I was finally worthy in the gods' eyes. They were going to have their messengers speak to me. But the second one made my stomach sick, and my body cringe. They're going to have my head for killing, and then burning, the body of a living Forerunner, even if it wasn't actually one.

"Very well," I said nervously.

I got up off of the bed, and walked towards the door. The numbing liquid proved very helpful.

"I had the Huragok give you the last of our numbing liquid," Thel told me. "You're going to need it all to look honorable in front of the Hierachs before they make their final decision."

I looked back at the huge Sangheili that was as big as the demon was, if not bigger, and then I left the room.

As I entered the hangar bay, a lone Spirit dropship with two Sangheili honor guardsmen outside of it was waiting for me. Their elaborate armor was red, with some plating that glowed in both bright gold and bright orange. Their elaborate energy staves, long metal staves with a forked tip also glowing bright gold and orange, stood proudly above them by ten whole feet. I could see High Charity waiting for me outside of the hangar bay's shield doors. I entered one of the side hatches, and the guards followed. The side hatch closed, and the Spirit took off towards High Charity.

As the Spirit arrived at the stalk of the holy city, and entered one of the thousands of huge sized docking stations, it went through a huge, blue scanner that went over the entire dropship, inside and out.

After fifteen long seconds of waiting, the dropship was clear, and it headed towards a landing pad. It slowed its movement, and finally stopped. It opened the side hatch I was in, and I walked out, with the guards right behind me.

A huge Jiralhanae chieftain named Tarturas was there waiting to greet me. The Brute was huge, at least two feet taller than me, with silver colored skin and a mohawk. He carried the Fist of Rukt. Even an Unggoy knew what this weapon was. It was a huge, gray gravity hammer with a round top and spheres at the front of the top.

"The Hierachs are waiting for you in the Sanctum of the Hierachs," his deep, booming voice said.

"I am honored to meet them," I told the chieftain.

"Bah!" Tarturas laughed at my words. "Thrilled? Let's see how thrilled you are when they take your head for your sins!"

The Brute was already sure I was dead. I wanted to think my reasons would make the Hierachs think otherwise, but I doubted it.

"Now let's just be on our way," Tarturas said, excited to watch me die for what I've done.

The scaling figure turned around, and, while dragging his mighty hammer ever so slightly above the ground, led me and the two honor guards towards the Hierachs' chambers.

The walk towards the Hierachs' chambers was very quite and very long. We rode many elevators and even a few Spirit dropships towards the chamber. Tarturas didn't say a word except for the one poor Unggoy that tripped in his way, and was thus immediately sent to paradise prematurely. Of course nothing happened to the Brute for what he did.

I was getting more and more nervous the closer we got to the chamber. For multiple reasons. One was simply because I was meeting the Hierachs. The second was obviously for my impending death.

We eventually came through a door, walked up the ramp, and turned to our right. We came upon a wide elevator, and we all stepped on. Tarturas hit the floating, purple holographic button glowing in the center, and the elevator willingly activated. It slowly went up.

I thought to myself, if this walk towards the Sanctum takes any longer, the numbing liquid's effects will wear off, and I will look pathetic in front of the Hierachs. I needed to look somewhat decent before I was killed.

I looked up towards the ceiling. There was a pair of cyan lights side by side on each corner of the huge upwards tunnel. The hole where the elevator would stop was like a shape similar to a triangle, which was upside down. Purple lights were at the end of each tip of the

triangle at the edges of the hole. I could see a green line on the ceiling.

As the elevator reached the top, I noticed the green line lead towards my incoming death. It lead towards a huge door that allowed entrance into the room holding the waiting Hierachs. The room that we entered was huge. The walls curved towards the ceiling and connected to the other side respectfully.

Round shaped, curved tables with purple symbols on them had floating, curved pillars above them with purple lights and, on the top of them, four points at each end of their round shapes, were on each side of the room. A single beam of cyan light rose from the center of these pillars. Sangheili honor guards stood at each side of the pillars. I counted at least fifteen guards.

As we walked closer towards the door above the ramp that lead into the holy room, smaller curved pillars were on the floor, reaching for the parallel one, as if they were magnets trying to connect to each other. The two honor guards that were following Tarturas and I stopped at the beginning of the ramp, and turned around, looking towards the elevator.

The huge door slowly came open from both sides, twice, to allow the chieftain and I access into the Santcum. As we entered the circular room, and walked past the two guards standing at the door, I saw the two Hierachs at the other side of us, sitting in their gravity thrones, staring at the huge, trapezoid shaped window which showed the human-controlled planet beyond.

In the center of the room laid a circular table. Its top glowed bright yellow. A cylinder hanged above the table. A bright cyan light emitted from the cylinder, and beamed down onto the glowing yellow, making a rather interesting green color. The floor was decaled with light green circles and purple stripes intersecting in between them.

"That's far enough," one of the Hierachs told us as we came closer to the table.

Tarturas bowed down on one knee, then I did the same.

"Noble Hierachs of Truth and Mercy," the huge brute began. "I have brought the heretic."

Truth and Mercy turned around to look at me. "Indeed you have," Truth said, his voice booming throughout the room.

I began to sweat. I was becoming very nervous. I was meeting the Hierachs in person. They were going to execute me. What if the numbing liquid wore off? So many things raced throughout my mind.

Truth and Mercy came towards us. They both looked frail, more Mercy than Truth did. Mercy was much older than Truth, so looks may have meant nothing for the younger Hierach's agility. Truth's skin was brown while Mercy's was gray. They both had beards, that seemed to be braided. Their necks curved towards me as they looked at me.

"So," Truth began questioning me. "You met an actual, living

Forerunner."

"Yes, holy ones," I told them as Tarturas looked at me with an evil grin.

"And you killed it because it deemed both you and your brother unworthy?" Truth asked, Mercy just sitting there, listening. Their gray gravity thrones slightly hovered above the ground, perfectly still unless the Hierachs shifted their bodies. Both chairs had huge arm rests, with various glowing holographic buttons.

"And then burned its body. Now why do these things?"

The moment of truth, I told myself. Be truthful, and you may perhaps be able to live... Somehow.

I took in a deep breath, exhaled, and then explained.

"The Luminary aboard our ship, Glorious Ascension, told us the Forerunner was coming towards my brother and I. As we bowed, welcoming its presence, it attacked my brother."

"What did it look like?" Mercy suddenly asked. Both Hierachs leaned forward with anticipation.

"It wore a green colored combat skin, with a bronze visor. I sadly did not see its face. I was more concentrated on burning its body."

"Now why was that?" Truth asked.

"Because the armor was... Unlike anything I've ever seen. Unlike anything anyone's ever seen. I believed that the humans should not have the armor. While we could have benefited from it, I'd rather be absolutely positive that the humans did not have it."

"A reasonable decision, but utterly pointless. A holy Forerunner's body, and armor, would have well been worth the risk of fighting for it again," Truth told me.

"What did you think about the Forerunner?" Mercy asked. "Was it like everything the scriptures have said? Did you feel a holy presence upon you?"

"No," I told them without hesitation. "It was the complete opposite. It found my brother unworthy. I believed my brother was a secret messenger from the gods. And a god would not kill a messenger."

"Blasphemy!" Tarturas suddenly said.

"You will hold your tongue!" Truth ordered the angered Brute. Tarturas backed up a few feet, head bowing. Truth looked at me. "Continue."

"It did not feel like a holy presence. More like... a demon. It worked with the humans." That thought enraged me. "The heretics! And it defied us! Its own worshipers! Destroyed my fellow brothers aboard a Spirit droship without hesitation! Killed my brother like a pathetic rat that deserved to not even breath oxygen! And then toyed

with me, like I was an infant's toy!"

Truth and Mercy both leaned back, taking in my words. After a few minutes, Truth finally spoke.

"Do you believe it was a human?"

"No. Even if it was given the gods' technology, there's no way it could have moved the way it did."

"So you believe that the Luminary lied, and that this demon was, in no way, either a Forerunner or a human?"

Telling the Hierachs that the Luminary lied... That was something no one would ever do. "Yes, holy ones."

Both Mercy's and Tarturas's eyes widened, shocked that I told them, right in front of their faces, that the holy technology made from the gods' themselves, had lied.

"Then where do you think it came from?" Truth asked.

"I... don't know."

Truth leaned back in his gravity throne and exhaled.

"Tarturas," Truth said as he looked at the chieftain. "Leave this room. And make sure the guards follow."

"But what if he-"

"He is of no threat to either of us."

Tarturas looked confused, but did not question Truth any longer. He turned around, and headed for the huge door to leave the room. He motioned the guards to leave the room. They hesitated for an instant, before the chieftain roared at them with impatient anger. They left without hesitation, and then the Brute followed. As the door closed, I turned to look at the Hierachs.

As I did, Truth suddenly grabbed my throat, and threw my head against the table. It did minor pain, thanks to both his frail arms, and the numbing liquid.

Truth held my head against the table, pulled out an energy cutlass, and ignited it.

My eyes widened as the pink, glass-like blade emerged from the small black handle and towards my throat. I began to sweat even more.

"You have spoken heresy in front of a Hierach," Truth began telling me as he put the cutlass across my throat. "You are being deemed guilty for telling the such that a holy Luminary has lied. For murdering a possible living Forerunner, and for burning its precious body and armor. And for using numbing liquid, an illegal substance to any Sangheili. How do you plead?"

"Guilty. I stand by my word."

"Then Mercy, wise councilor, as my witness, I deem you... not

guilty."

My eyes widened. My heart stopped. The whole world stopped. Not guilty?

"I'm not sure I quite understand," I said as Truth let go of my throat and put away the cutlass as it deactivated. I stood up. "I've done everything wrong."

"You live because the gods say you do," Truth told me. "You will not speak of this. To anyone."

I bowed down on one knee.

"Yes, holy ones."

"Good, now leave. Mercy and I must discuss... other matters."

I stood up, and began to leave the room.

"And Sangheili?" Truth asked.

"Yes, holy one?" I asked as I looked at Truth. Mercy had already moved towards the window to look down upon the planet.

"What is your name?"

"Mori 'Vhokuree."

"Do mine, and the gods' wills justice, and I will see that you are served well."

I bowed down. "Thank you, holy one."

I turned around, and left the room. I later slit my left wrist five times for what had happened. Three for the accusations for what I did on the planet, whether they were right or wrong. One for my brother. And one for using numbing liquid in front of the Hierachs. I did not believe much in honor, but I felt that slitting my wrist was needed to be done.

Abigail hit the stop button on the recorder.

"We have a recording of what happened after that," Abigail told Mori.

"What? How?" Mori asked. Very shocked, but couldn't believe what Abigail said.

"Well, one of our sleeper cells that was onboard High Charity at that time managed to sneak a recorder inside the Sanctum. The recorder held many discussions. Do you want to hear what Truth and Mercy discussed after what happened with you?"

"Aren't we running out of time, Abigail?" Mori asked. He ignored about the sleeper cell. He didn't believe it. Couldn't believe it. That was near impossible for humans, or rather, anyone.

"This recording is very short. And I need to go get some coffee, so it'll be a nice little break for me, and interesting information for

you."

Mori exhaled. "Very well."

Abigail got up from her chair, and left the room. After fifteen seconds, she came back with a data pad. She hit a few buttons, then turned it around, and slid it towards Mori. Mori caught it.

"Just hit the play button. I'll be back by the time the recording is done."

Abigail then left the room again.

"Coffee? You do know we have no coffee here, right?" Jacob asked.

"She's just delaying," Mike answered.

"And when the Covenant and the Prometheans break through that door," Ryan began. "I'll make sure I get the last laugh. Because when we lose this information because of Abi's bullshit, her face is going to be priceless."

"Shut it, Ryan!" Abigail said, angrily. "We'll have the information. Or are you telling me the best of the best, super enhanced Spartans can't take on a few aliens and robots? Because if that's true, then I guess I should be laughing right now."

Ryan didn't say another word.

"I really do need some coffee though," Abigail said, leaning against the wall closest to her, feeling the cold chill of it run down her back. The air conditioner was on high, making this room feel like Antarctica. That was, of course, emphasis. But nonetheless, everyone in the room was shivering except for Jacob. Because if it isn't cold for Jacob, then all hell would break loose.

"God, can we turn up the heat?" Mike asked, shivering. His breath being revealed from the cold.

"If you don't like it," Jacob began. "Then you can show yourself to the door. I'm pretty sure it's very warm outside."

"It's like negative thirty in here! There's no sense in this!"

"You shut your goddamn mouth now, or I'm forcing you out there with just a pistol. Hell, might not even give you the pistol."

Mike shut his mouth, and looked the other way.

"Is that recording almost done?" Jacob asked Abigail.

Abigail looked through the one-way window. "Yeah, it should be just finishing up."

Abigail left the room, and headed for the door to continue listening to Mori's story.

Mori hit the recording button on the recorder.

"Numbing liquid, can you believe it?" Mori could tell that was Mercy's voice. "The council would be very interested in knowing that a Sangheili used such a dishonorable thing."

"He did it to look proud and strong in front of us," That was Truth's voice, Mori knew without a doubt. "It makes sense why he used it."

"Still... Now, why did you let him go?"

"I saw obedience in him. Without any questions. In anything he had to do. That's rare in a Sangheili. Usually, they question nearly everything to save their honor. Even the council does this."

"True. Do you believe his story?"

"Doesn't matter if I believe it or not. If the Covenant ever found out that a Forerunner was working with the humans..."

There was a long pause.

Mercy brought the conversation back to life. "So what do you plan on doing with him? Make him a member of the honor guardsmen?"

"He could prove to be a good one, to say the least."

"Regret has noticed Mori. Given a report. He's a terrible Sangheili, even in Regret's eyes. If it wasn't for his brother-"

Truth interrupted. "I don't care about the reports. What I care about is loyalty. That's what the honor guard is mostly about: loyalty. And he definitely has that quality. Also, he just came back from a mission that makes all his previous ones not matter. Give him time. Tell Regret that."

The door opened, and Abigail came through it, and then sat down on her chair.

"Hope I came in just the right time," Abigail asked. "Without having to interrupt the recording."

"It appears to have just ended," Mori replied. "I don't smell coffee."

"What?"

Mori placed the recorder down, and slid it towards Abigail. She caught it, and continued to give Mori a confused look.

"You said you went for some coffee. I don't smell any hint of it. Neither on your lips, nor in your breath."

"Oh. Turns out we ran out. Oh well. The break was nice."

"Indeed. Shall I continue?"

Abigail hit the recording on the recorder.

"Continue."

End
file.